

Challenges Before Social Sciences In Free Market Society

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Abstract: *The present article is a critical and analytical attempt to understand the roles of Social Sciences in a 'free market society'. Free market society is controlled and regulated by Corporate Capitalism which makes governments and related formal institutions subordinate / enslave. Social Sciences as unified system of knowledge give rise to 'critical citizenship' and mindset capable of 'raising questions'. Thus, Social Sciences along with Humanities, Philosophy and Liberal Arts have been attacked by corporate capitalist everywhere. These social categories of corporate Capitalists prefer the disciplines of Science, Engineering, Technology, Mathematics and Management so that they could find 'apolitical' workforce devoid from trade union movement led consciousness. For institutionalising apolitical consciousness, marginalisation of Social Sciences has become one of the objectives of Corporate Capitalists and related far-rightist forces. The present article with this understanding evaluates the methodological, conceptual and pedagogical issues associated with Social Sciences. In fact, Social Sciences as system of knowledge is an 'intellectual movement' right from French Revolution till today. Author comments that marginalisation of Social Sciences is an organised effort of making commoners 'victimised' by state and Corporate Capitalists in such a way that voiceless world could appear.*

Keywords: Free Market Society, Critical Citizenship, Cultural homogenisation, Just World Order, Generational polarisation, Humanistic Education, Global Social Sciences, De- humanisation, Vaicharik Swaraj

I

Let me start with my analytical - critical views about the importance of Social Sciences in our social life by raising an observation based experiential learning. 'When we are unable to find an answer to any question; there is lack of understanding about 'Social Sciences'. Our consciousness has always been structured by Social Sciences, Philosophy, Humanities, Liberal Arts and Philosophy of Science. These knowledge systems are very close to our 'private world' and 'public world.' In fact, the 'introspection' of social units is always associated with those addresses which we make in relation to Social Sciences led consciousness. In fact, Social Sciences led Consciousness is pre-requisite to 'Critical Citizenship'. The notion of 'Critical Citizenship' refers to those enlightened collectivities who by using their ideas raise questions before state and related powerful groups about the policies, actions and objectives. These sets of enlightened collectivities criticise those parochial identities which create segregation in the society. The State of segregation institutionalises 'othering' - a complex structure based on conflict, hate, violence, atrocities and exclusion. Segregation attacks on cultural heterogeneity and supports 'majoritarian led cultural homogenisation.' In Indian Society the project of 'Hindu Rashtra' supported by far rightist political, cultural and religious powers is an example of segregation based on 'othering' framed on the basis of religious identities in which caste order, language and territory are used in relation to majoritarian religion i.e. Hinduism. Since social scientists, by and large are either indifferent or silent, the roles of Social Sciences need close analysis. In fact, the world has changed in significant ways. After the collapse of Socialistic Systems, the logic of 'Free Market Society' has been converted into 'concrete reality.' The notion of 'Market Society' for the first time was discussed by Karl Polanyi. In 'Market Society' exchange relations are regulated by markets as a result reciprocity and redistribution processes move

toward exclusion (Harriss-White Barbara, 2005, *India's Market Society: Three Essays in Political Economy*, Gurgaon, Three Essays Collective. See the Preamble of the book). The shift from 'Market Society' to 'Free Market Society' is another significant change in the sphere of political economy. In free market society State becomes subordinate to global market controlled by Corporate Capitalists. Whereas in market Society State acted as central institution which protected society from the ravages of markets, Polanyi commented (See the preamble of Barbara's book). Free Market society gives prominence to the system of knowledge comprising Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Management and institutionally ignores Social Sciences and Humanities. The Free-Market Society Supports the roles of man as (automated) machine while Social Sciences give importance to dialectical relationship between man and machine. For the author of present narrative, Social Sciences are 'unified Social Sciences Knowledge System' in which History, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Literature and Philosophy in interdependent ways examine 'societal realities'. The devotion of Social Sciences as unified system thus reveals pursuit, production and dissemination of that knowledge by which societal realities could be understood critically and analytically by all social units in general and students of Social Sciences (including social scientists) in particular. In this unified system of knowledge ideologies, theories, social thoughts, experiences, imaginations, methodologies and interactions play interdependent roles. Thus, Social Sciences is a dynamic academic entity. The methodologies used in Social Sciences are based upon two meanings of science namely 'Science as Realism' and 'Science as Ideology' rather than Science as Positivism. As a result Social Sciences in terms of understanding and knowing stresses upon (I) Historical contexts of Societal realities (II) Philosophical Contexts of Societal realities (III) Presentation/Construction of related societal realities by literary figures (IV) Class, Race, Caste, Religion, Ethnicity and Gender related dynamism in constructing the related societal reality (V) How does political economy influence and direct the related societal reality (VI) How do commoners view that societal reality and (VII) What are those possible alternatives by which related

societal reality can be replaced so that oppressive realities could be addressed with forceful manners? It means that Social Sciences can never be 'a-historical'. One more question or issue becomes significant in this context; "Are Social Sciences changing its transformative character and surrendering its academic and critical wisdom before political masters? It can be stated without any doubt that the basic objective of Social Sciences is to raise the complexities of the 'life word' of marginalised sections of society then only it can preserve the values of enlightenment - the pre-requisite to the 'Age of Reason'.

II

When we examine the character and roles of Social Sciences in present day 'insecure world order', the free market led Corporate Capitalism and roles of far-rightist political and cultural forces invite out critical attention. The Corporate led Capitalism with unconditional support by far rightist forces has perpetuated inequalities in all spheres and new forms of imperialism, making multi-dimensional attacks on (international) values of the logic of a 'better and just world order'. Federalism, Democracy, Justice, Equality and Secular values-based freedoms are under deep crisis. The production of critical knowledge is not appreciated by State agencies because it goes against the interest of Corporate Capitalists who are making organised efforts to monopolise the global resources. The wars between Russia and Ukraine, between Israel and Palestine, between USA - Israel and Iran, Military intervention of U.S.A in Venezuela and attack by Israel on Lebanon are some of those instances, which reveal how free market society and far rightist forces together use 'militarism' for controlling the resources. Violation of international laws is a reality and developing world and small nation-states (having natural resources) are facing crisis for existence. 'Might is Right' has become a global rule which has been strongly rejected by Social Sciences since French Revolution particularly. Social Sciences, Humanities, Languages and Philosophies can meaningfully survive if they continuously analyse the cause-effect relationship about inequalities, oppression, atrocities, sufferings, war, violence, exclusions and marginalisation followed by constructions of alternatives so that 'just society' could become a

social fact. The 21st century reveals that all forms of power lie with the corporate capitalists which is an expression of new forms of '*colonial and imperialist orders*'. Pierre Bourdieu, during the participation in a movement against the destruction of a civilisation associated with the existence of public service in France states: "In the work of reinventing the public services, intellectuals, writers, artists, scientists and others have a decisive role to play On the question of the supposed iron laws of the financial markets in whose name so many political initiatives are sacrificed" (Bourdieu, Pierre (1998) *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time*, Cambridge, Polity Press, Page 27). This statement invites our attention towards the logic of literary figure Mahashweta Devi who says that 'modernity of tradition' gives rise to violence (Aalochna, Vol 79, Delhi, Rajkamal, Page 16). In fact, ruling class everywhere tries to use both modernity and traditions for 'selective purposes'. In both the cases the victim is 'ruled'. Corporate governed media produce information, news and entertainment programmes in such a way that no religious and cultural orthodoxies disappear, rather this world of orthodoxies appear and reappear in strongest manner so that consciousness could be controlled and reasons could be fall. As a result, progress, happiness, equality before law, justice, fraternity and other values of French enlightenment are now faded. The thinking process of mankind has been attacked from different corners. The recent wars, acts of terrorism, forms of violence in private and public spheres and systemic oppression reveal that weapons have replaced reason. For deeper understanding of such replacement (reason by weapons) Social Sciences need revisit of Hegelian dialectic, Marxian theories and V.I Lenin's interpretations about how capitalistic orders move toward imperialism. The technological Capitalism is leading to serious threat to human labour. Automation to an extent rejects dignity of human labour although it is an universal logic that 'all commodities are products of human labour', they are 'materialised labour' (Marcuse Herbert, 1986, *Reason and Revolution*, London, Routledge Page 296). The most important role of Social Sciences in this present era of insecurity and violence is to re-establish the dignity of human labour and international solidarity of workforce associated with manual and intellectual labour then only Ideological attack can be made on wars

which in the opinion of Lenin are main objectives of imperialistic powers. In fact, Social Sciences as system of knowledge are capable of confronting with the totalitarian Order(s) and with those socio-economic and politico-cultural attributes which construct totalitarianism. In this Context we can point out the formation of 'Sociology Liberation Movement' in United States of America in the month of August of 1968. The basic cause of formation of Sociology Liberation movement was to oppose U.S. involvement in Vietnam. This movement leads to ideological debate and generational polarisation with the question of 'Knowledge for whom?' (Oppenheimer Martin and others (edt) (1991), *Radical Sociologists and the Movement: Experiences, Lessons and Legacies*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, Page 17 and 45). It means one of the directions which Social Sciences have adopted is to oppose 'sufferings' of all forms. It means that methodology of a single discipline is now an outdated logic. One more issue is now giving rise to complexities in the spheres of social relations and power dynamics. 'Mistaken Modernity' is now organically linked with 'mistaken identities'. It is perpetuating reckless acts of violence. Far rightist forces with the support of market driven forces spread the issues of 'mistaken identities' (for example a cultural programme is projected by certain far-rightist groups as religious conversion programme through fake communication by media). Communal, sectarian, racial, religious, caste, political and gender violence appear due to such 'mistaken identities'. For critical expositions of such states of violence, Social Sciences must synthesise methodological localism, methodological nationalism and methodological globalism. These efforts will create new insights about the universal conceptualisation and contextualisation based understanding of the language of Social Sciences. As student of Social Sciences, it can be argued that after the collapse of socialistic systems, the processes of globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation have attacked on welfarist policies of large number of nation-states and framed those policies which serve the interests of corporates, powerful and privileged social categories. These policies slowly and gradually have weakened democratic and secular order. But at the same time each and every Society has been compelled to examine the contradictory relationship between forms of

capital and forms of labour, so that opinions against authoritarian order could appear through the frames of praxis.

III

Authoritarian Order, acceptance of fascism and popularity of far-rightist ideologies with the use of religions, traditions, nationalism of communal-sectarian-cultural nature and social divisions based on identity politics have subverted secular-rational-democratic scholarship as well as the system of humanistic education in which dissent is the prime value. It stimulates us to analyse those contradictions which are found in 'bourgeois democracy' - a systemic expression of Capitalism as well as of 'war economy' which in the opinion of 'western world' is a necessity for protecting (bourgeois) democracy. Bourgeois (late Capitalist) democracy has been strengthened further with the active support of authoritarianism, ideology of fascism (in which attacks on immigrants, working class, minorities, women, children, blacks, adivasis, lower castes, peasants as well as Sovereignty of small nation-states having rich natural resources have been attacked violently) and processes of different forms of 'othering'. After the financial crisis of 2008, we find some new development in the process of accumulation. Ursula Huws in an article 'Crisis as Capitalist Opportunity: The New Accumulations Through Public Service Commodification' talks about earlier phase as 'primary primitive accumulation' and recent phase as 'secondary primitive accumulation' (based on education or health Care) (Albo Greg et al [edited] (2023) *Capitalism, Technology, Labour; A Socialist Register Reader*, Delhi. Aakar Books). The author of this article finds the possible but rapid appearance of 'tertiary primitive accumulation' (based on Artificial Intelligence and related latest technologies). These new phases of accumulations have transformed and now even perpetuated use value into exchange value (Ursula Huws, 2023, page 195 in the book edited by Greg Albo and others).

These developments need a critical exposition of 'Neo-liberal Social Sciences'. The sharp rise of inequalities and decline in the working conditions of work forces have led to social disintegration in the sphere of all forms of social relationship and Constitutional moralities,

making increase in 'livelihood deprivation' in marginalised communities globally. These possibilities and roles of Social Sciences were conceptually and theoretically indicated in 'World Social Sciences Report, 2010', Knowledge Divides [published by International Social Sciences Council, UNESCO Publishing]. The report emphasises 'the huge disparities in research capacities across countries and the fragmentation of knowledge that hamper the capacity of the Social Sciences to respond to the Challenges of today and tomorrow' (Taken from the Foreword of the report). The report expresses the fact that Social Sciences are 'heavily biased towards English and towards the countries where English is most widely spoken in academic circle'. It simply means that Social Sciences do not give importance to those countries where processes of academic communication do not take place in English language. It hampers the possibility of functional interplay between developed and developing countries in the context of advancement of truly 'global Social Sciences' because the cultural traditions, living patterns, social systems and indigenous modernities of non-English speaking countries are not found appropriate places academically. In other words, 'linguistic hegemony' hampers egalitarian developmental possibilities of Social Sciences. One Can not imagine the socio-cultural sufferings of people of non-English speaking world with deep realities due to methodological inadequacies also [effective participation of the sample units is not possible due to language constraints]. As a result, the English speaking hegemony will place importance to status-quoist and bourgeoisie- interest centric Social Sciences. The classroom transactions of such Social Sciences make students of marginalised sections disinterested to the causes of own sufferings thus transformative consciousness related to opposition of oppressive Social Systems becomes a distant reality. It is one of the causes for generating distance between the content, pedagogy and methods of Social Sciences with 'human emancipation' resulting into acceptance and rise of totalitarianism. This outcome is one of the major threats to 'Public Social Sciences' in which criticism and alternatives are significant attributes so that students could become aware of various forms of contradictions - a necessity to put academic

challenge to all forms of hegemony for rejecting oppressive socio-political and economico-cultural order.

Another report which becomes important in this context is Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the restructuring of the Social Sciences published in the year 1996 by Stanford University Press, Stanford. The report is prepared by Immanuel Wallerstein and others with the main title of 'Open the Social Sciences'. The report discusses the issues of emergence, maturity and current pressures for transformation of the Social Sciences. The report examines three phases related to emergence and development of Social Sciences. The first phase is associated with emergence of Social Sciences from middle of the 19th Century to the end of Second World War. The Second phase describes that dynamism which appears in Social Sciences after Second World War. The third phase describes the inadequacies and other wrongs which have emerged in Social Sciences and what can be those efforts by which these wrongs can be minimised. In the first phase two kinds of division in the system of knowledge emerged. The first division in the form of Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities emerges. The second division takes place within Social Sciences. In this phase Social Sciences were dominated by colonial orders which excluded the social world of marginalised sections and of people politically and economically controlled by colonial masters. In second phase, rapid economic advancement takes place along with higher education system. During this phase Social Sciences acquire the character of big business, multi-dimensionality in contents, concepts and methodologies occur but division of labour between Sociology, Economics and Political Science remains intact which is an obstacle in the formation of adequate Social Sciences. It clearly indicates the logic that Social Sciences can become appropriate only when they examine the social phenomena with trans-disciplinary understanding and methodological plurality. In third phase, report shows deep concern about threats of budgetary cut and competition of Social Sciences with skill oriented quasi-disciplines which have become important and popular because definition of science is reduced to research and development (R&D). The objectives of Social Sciences

are associated with the knowledge of those 'committed fields' which examine and test those ideas, thoughts and narratives which 'humanise' societies including global society. In fact, one of the objectives of Social Sciences in this Context becomes to produce 'organic intellectuals' and 'critical scholarship'. For this purpose, Social Sciences must pay academic and actional attention to examine the knowledge systems of non-western world which have also been centres for several forms of social movements including new social movement.

In Indian context these issues have been raised by number of Scholars. Social Scientists of global repute are advised to examine Indian Philosophical Traditions with contradictions, dynamics of Indian history, Indian political economy, roles of farmers and non-agriculturist workforce in developmental processes, socio-economic, cultural and religious causes for institutionalising 'planned poverty', structural hierarchies based on caste, class, religion, ethnicity, rural-urban contrast and division between Adivasis and non-adivasis. Analysis of Pre-Colonial, Colonial and Post Colonial history of social life, cultures, economy and roles of nation, nation state, political parties, socio-cultural and religious organisations is also essential in order to generate, concepts, methods, ideologies and theories. Evaluation of gender discrimination, gender violence in domestic and non-domestic world, roles of oppressive nature by patriarchy and rise of feminism during various phases of Indian History are also needed so that gender-relation itself could become a perspective in non-western Social Sciences and a mode of comparison with western Social Sciences. In fact, to understand critically the interface between western and non-western Social Sciences provides us that consciousness which can be termed as 'School of democratic Social life'. It is possible only when importance is given to dialectical approach. Social Sciences in present era of insecurity must remember Rosa Luxemburg's view that imperialist phase of world capitalism carries with it imminent threat of world war and proletarian organisations would be the weapon which would defend mankind from the horror of war (Howard Dick (ed.), 2024, *Selected Political Writings of Rosa Luxemburg*, Delhi, Aakar Books, page 23).

However, society specific constrictions are necessary to evaluate the growth of Social Sciences. In India Manindra Nath Thakur (Gyan ki Rajniti, 2020, Setu Prakashan, Noida) and Aaditya Nigam (Aasman Aur Bhi Hai, 2023, Setu Prakashan Noida) argue about 'Vaicharik Swaraj' in which decolonisation of knowledge becomes important but at the same time Traditional Indian Knowledge system controlled by Manuvad is also attacked because it is also a form of "hegemony" - an ideology of powerful sections of society of India which keep their control intact. India is a culturally plural society (the same structure is the characteristic of all most all nation-states of South Asia) as a result Indian society possesses 'complex collective conscience' which can be understood when schools of Indian Philosophy are critically assessed. Ravi Bhushan (Buddhijiviuon ki Zimmedari, 2023, Setu Prakashan, Noida) considers that such assessment is the most important responsibility of intellectuals related to Hindi belt of India. These opinions and views of other Social Scientists prove this logic that Social Sciences must evaluate the dilemma between traditionalities and modernities and their consequences of functional and dysfunctional nature.

IV

In conclusion, it can be stated that Social Sciences must give importance to knowledge systems of western and non- western world which can change the hegemonic conceptual language of Social Sciences, its methodologies and related theoretical constructions. There is a need to introduce new concepts like 'Swaraj', methodological tools in the form of biographies of personalities who have been experiencing violence and atrocities and theories like 'theory of Creative Society'. When a student of Social Sciences moves from one village to another village, from one slum to another slum, the data science starts losing importance and qualitative nature-the root of Social Sciences take the centre-stage. It is the real scientific study of society, the behavioural patterns and construction of that logic which influences other Society. Then only the real nature of Social Sciences emerges and understanding of public becomes part of consciousness. In Indian Social Sciences the participatory study of P. Sainath entitled 'Everybody Loves a Good Drought', the deep

interviews-based study again of P. Sainath entitled 'The Last Heroes' are some of the examples which make critical influence on Global Social Sciences also. We can term it 'People Social Sciences'. We Can accept the logic framed by John D. Brewer that Social Sciences have necessarily always been transgressive and its critical edge is what makes Social Sciences distinctive. Social Sciences must be accepted as 'post-disciplinary' and (post) global (Brewer John D (2013): The Public Value of the Social Sciences, London, Bloomsbury, Page 194).

In the last we can argue that deeper understanding of nature of science, debate on objectivity, forms of society, specific rationalities, theoretical debates, developmental issues, debates within culture and social knowledge and philosophies of critical realism are pre-requisites to make Social Sciences socially relevant. Street play (Nukkad Natak), folk stories, different forms of poetry and different kind of understanding about traditions, modernities, folklores and social construction of personalities are most appropriate tools to construct those areas of Social Sciences by which authoritarian Orders Can be challenged. It is the most important challenge before Social Sciences everywhere otherwise free market society related corporate forces will make human civilization 'de-humanised'.

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Challenges Facing Social Sciences In Second Quarter Of 21st Century India

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Abstract: *This paper highlights the challenges that scholars face explaining the problems that confront the wellbeing of humankind today. The recent changes unleashed globally to neoliberalism needs an explanation. Scholars are attempting to explain these in a multi-disciplinary way.*

Over thirty years ago, Gulbenkian Commission made recommendations to restructure the social sciences to explain the emerging changes of that era. Since then, the crisis has only increased because of neoliberalism. The threats of pollution, climate change and growing inequality worldwide, including India, is now visible. This inequality is having differential impact on climate, pollution, health, societal and human wellbeing. Then there is the emergence of AI. Its unanticipated consequences are now being analyzed.

To examine these issues, the restructuring of the social sciences which has begun at the global level, is yet to be seen in India. So, a change is needed in policy decisions and in cultural attitudes in India.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, Inequality, Social Sciences, Pollution, Climate Change, AI

I write this paper at a time in 2025, when the whole world is caught in the forces released by the present president of the United States of America, Donald Trump, right from the time he took oath of office on